

LANGLEY LANE BIRCH VILLAGE, MIDDLETON HERITAGE STATEMENT



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Section 1 Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been written to accompany the full planning application for the proposed residential development of 23 dwellings at Langley Lane, Birch Village, Middleton. Planning permission was previously granted for a development of 23 dwellings on the site. The current proposals are for a residential development of 23 dwellings, but with some alterations to the particular house designs and a slight alteration to the previously approved layout. The proposal site adjoins the Birch Village Conservation Area. This Heritage Statement should be read in conjunction with the proposed plans and elevations, the specification and other information submitted with the planning application.

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in accordance with the NPPF and the NPPG. It has been prepared by Kathryn Sather & Associates, Heritage Conservation Consultants. This Heritage Statement aims to provide sufficient information specific to the proposal site and its immediate surroundings. To this end the statement provides a summary of the history and development of the local area and the history of the site as far as can be ascertained. It assesses the special interest of the Birch Village Conservation Area and the contribution that the proposal site makes to this special interest. The Statement also describes the proposed works, sets out the desirability of the proposed works and assesses the impact of the proposed works upon the special interest of the Conservation Area.

Section 2 Planning Policy Context

2.1 Introduction

Both national and local planning policies and guidance affect the planning policy context for the proposal site. These include the Rochdale Core Strategy, the saved policies from the Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan (Adopted June 2006), Draft Places for Everyone – Joint Development Plan (August 2021), the Birch Village Conservation Area Appraisal, the NPPG, the NPPF Chapter 16, and guidance from Historic England.

2.2 Rochdale Core Strategy (Adopted October 2016)

The Rochdale Core Strategy was formally adopted by the council on 19 October 2016. It now forms part of the Local Plan for the borough and will be used in decision-making on planning applications. Relevant policies include:

SO3 - To improve design, image and quality of place

To do this we will focus on:

1. Raising design quality and promoting sustainable developments;
2. Improving gateways into the borough and main transport corridors to improve the image of the borough;
3. Protecting and enhancing our heritage and natural assets, the special character of our towns, our countryside, open spaces, river valleys and water features; and
4. Creating new identity and character where it is lacking (e.g. inner areas and road corridors).

P2 - Protecting and enhancing character, landscape and heritage

1. We will protect and enhance the borough's character, the distinctiveness of its town centres, housing areas and countryside, and the qualities of its landscapes, utilising the considerable potential of these assets in development and regeneration schemes. We will do this by:

- a. Requiring new development to integrate successfully with the key natural features of the borough, e.g. river valleys and the Pennine landscape;
- b. Requiring new development to take opportunities to protect and open up important views of hills and valleys which are part of the borough's unique character;
- c. Restoring the River Roch and other water bodies to their place as key and attractive features of the borough, including opening up waterways where they have been covered, and enhancing their setting, heritage assets and biodiversity potential;
- d. Protecting, enhancing and utilising outstanding cultural landscapes, such as the Cheesden Valley area and around Littleborough and Hollingworth Lake; and
- e. Conserving and enhancing townscape character.

2. We will protect the borough's heritage by:

- a. Conserving, enhancing and promoting key heritage assets, both statutory and nonstatutory, including consideration of their wider settings. Key heritage assets of the borough include:
 - i. Four outstanding conservation areas: Central Rochdale, Middleton and Littleborough town centres and Rock Nook / Summit;
 - ii. Other designated assets such as listed buildings, conservation areas, registered parks and scheduled ancient monuments;
 - iii. The heritage of the Co-operative movement, the Rochdale Pioneers and the Labour movement;
 - iv. The Edgar Wood and J. H. Sellers cultural heritage;
 - v. The heritage of the seventeenth and eighteenth century vernacular tradition; and
 - vi. The engineering heritage, including mills, canals and railways.

- b. Conserving, enhancing and utilising other non-statutory heritage assets of local interest, be they buildings, parks, gardens or archaeological sites, including promoting their sensitive restoration;
- c. Using heritage assets positively and intelligently to strengthen identity and image and support the visitor economy, particularly in development and regeneration schemes; and
- d. Prioritising the conservation of heritage assets at risk from decay, giving special attention to designated heritage assets in this regard.

2.3 Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan (Adopted June 2006)

A number of 'saved' UDP policies remain and will be used for planning purposes until replaced by the Allocations Development Plan Document. These are set out in Appendix 3 of the Core Strategy. Relevant saved policy to this Heritage Statement is:

BE/17 NEW DEVELOPMENT AFFECTING CONSERVATION AREAS

Development proposals will be permitted that preserve or enhance the character or appearance of a conservation area. In assessing a proposal, the following principles – where relevant – will be taken into account:

- a) Its relationship to existing buildings, the site and its surroundings;
- b) Its design - including elevations, roof form, materials, finishes and detailing;
- c) The retention, replacement and restoration of historic features and details of buildings, and - in the public realm - walls, paving and street furniture;
- d) The retention and enhancement of landscaped areas, trees and natural features;
- e) The design of new shop fronts (and replacements and/or alterations to those existing) should reflect the character or appearance of the conservation area, consistent with the provisions of Policy BE/5;
- f) The design and siting of advertisements, new street furniture, paving and other highway surfaces and related structures (e.g., lighting and signs); and
- g) The design and siting of car parking and servicing facilities.

Development proposals should include detailed plans and drawings enabling its implication(s) for the character and appearance of the conservation area to be established.

2.4 Places For Everyone – Joint Development Plan (Publication Stage Plan, August 2021)

Places for Everyone is a long-term plan of nine of the Greater Manchester districts (Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford and Wigan) for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. It has been published by the GMCA on behalf of the nine districts. The plan is a joint development plan of the nine districts which will determine the kind of development that takes place in their boroughs, maximising the use of brownfield land and urban spaces while protecting Green Belt land from the risk of unplanned development. The Plan is at its publication consultation stage. Relevant policy includes:

Policy JP-P 2 Heritage

Through this Plan we will proactively manage and work with partners to positively conserve, sustain and enhance its historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. Opportunities will be pursued to aid the promotion, enjoyment, understanding and interpretation of heritage assets, as a means of maximising wider public benefits and reinforcing Greater Manchester's distinct identity and sense of place.

Local Plans will set out the key elements which contribute to the district's identity, character and distinctiveness and which should be the priority for safeguarding and enhancing in the future, and

demonstrate a clear understanding of the historic environment and the heritage values of sites, buildings or areas and their relationship with their surroundings. This knowledge should be used to inform the positive integration of our heritage by:

1. Setting out a clear vision that recognises and embeds the role of heritage in place-making;
2. Utilising the heritage significance of a site or area in the planning and design process, providing opportunities for interpretation and local engagement;
3. Integrating the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings, with creative contextual architectural responses that contribute to their significance and sense of place;
4. Delivering positive benefits that sustain and enhance the historic environment, as well as contributing to the economic viability, accessibility and environmental quality of a place, and to social wellbeing; and
5. Exploring opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that restoration of historic buildings offer.

Particular consideration will be given to ensure that the significance of key elements of the historic environment which contribute to Greater Manchester's distinctive identity and sense of place are protected from harm. These include historic town centres, places of worship, historic transport routes including the canal network, industrial buildings and structures including textile mills, farmsteads and other sites, buildings and areas of identified archaeological, architectural, artistic and historic value.

Development proposals affecting a designated heritage asset (or an archaeological site of national importance) and a conservation area should conserve those elements which contribute to its significance including those identified in any conservation area appraisal as making a positive contribution to the area. Harm to such elements will only be permitted where this is clearly justified and outweighed by the public benefits of the proposal.

Development proposals should identify assets of archaeological interest and use this information to avoid harm or minimise it through design and appropriate mitigation. Where applicable, development should make provision for the protection of significant archaeological assets and landscapes. The protection of undesignated heritage assets of archaeological interest equivalent to a scheduled monument should be given equivalent weight to designated heritage assets.

Where heritage assets have been identified as being at risk, Local Plans should identify specific opportunities for them to contribute to regeneration and place-making, and they should set out strategies for their repair and re-use.

Proposals should be informed, as necessary, by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate heritage assessment(s) in the development plan evidence base and/or any updated heritage assessment submitted as part of the planning application process.

2.5 The Birch Village Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

The Birch Village Conservation Area Appraisal was adopted by Rochdale Borough Council in 2013. The special interest of the Conservation Area is summarised in the Conservation Area Appraisal as:

The special architectural and historic interest of the Birch Conservation Area lies predominantly in its distinctive townscape (formed along the line of Heywood Old Road) as well as its association with notable architect, Edgar Wood.

The character of the Conservation Area therefore lies in the linear, road orientated form of the townscape and the quality of the architecture along its length. This special interest can be summarised as follows;

- Strong association with influential architect, Edgar Wood (including the Grade II listed Birch Drinking Fountain)
- The close historic and spatial relationship between the architecture of the village and Heywood Old Road, creating a linear townscape.
- The characteristic combination of early 19th century industrial architecture and late 19th century high quality Arts and Crafts style residences
- Distinctive local architectural detail - such as stylised gable ends, decorative roof ridges, flower-motif terracotta tilework and projecting bay windows.

2.6 National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Practice Guidance

Section 16 of the NPPF, 'Conserving and enhancing the historic environment', provides the policy framework for the conservation of the historic environment. The following guidance is relevant to the site:

194. In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

197. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- (a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- (b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- (c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

199. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

200. Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of:

- (a) grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional;
- (b) assets of the highest significance, notably scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, grade I and II* listed buildings, grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

201. Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:

- (a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and
- (b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and

(c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and

(d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

204. Local planning authorities should not permit the loss of the whole or part of a heritage asset without taking all reasonable steps to ensure the new development will proceed after the loss has occurred.

205. Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

206. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

2.7 Other National Guidance Documents: Historic England

Several Historic England documents provide relevant guidance. These include *Historic England Advice Note 7 2nd Edition (2021)*; *The Setting of Heritage Assets: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 (2017)*; *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management (2019)* and *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12 (2019)*.

The Historic England document *The Setting of Heritage Assets* defines setting as: ‘the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’

Setting is also described as being a separate term to curtilage, character and context. Curtilage is largely a legal term referring to the extent of a property boundary, as prescribed by ownership and the character of a place depends upon a sum of all of its attributes. Setting is largely a visual term and thus the way in which an asset is experienced, can also be affected by noise, vibration, odour and other factors.

The guidance sets out a five staged process for assessing the implications of proposed developments on setting. The steps are as follows:

1: Identifying the heritage assets and their settings

The first stage of the analysis is to identify which heritage assets and associated settings are likely to be affected by the proposed development.

2: Assessing whether, how and to what degree settings make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset

Initially, the significance of the heritage asset needs to be assessed. This assessment should be informed by both archival research and site survey. In assessing the contribution of the setting to significance, the physical surroundings of the asset should be considered, as well as the relationship with other heritage assets, the way in which the asset is experienced, the asset’s associations with people and events and patterns of use. This information will provide a baseline for establishing the effects of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset.

3: Assessing the effect of the proposed development on the significance of the asset

The range of effects the proposals may have on the setting and the resultant degree of harm or benefit to the significance of the heritage asset can now be considered. The guidance advises on the best approach for assessing the effects of the specific proposals on the heritage assets concerned. In general,

‘The assessment should address the key attributes of the proposed development in terms of its: location and siting, form and appearance, additional effects and permanence.’

4: Maximising enhancement and minimising harm

The guidance advises that adverse affects can be limited and the maximum advantage achieved if proposals liable to affect setting are considered from the project’s inception. Further limitation of harm can be achieved by producing a well-designed scheme that will minimise detrimental impacts and identify opportunities for enhancement.

Steps to reduce the harm caused by proposals to the significance of a heritage asset include the relocation of a development or its elements, changes to the proposed designs, the creation of visual or acoustic screening, or management measures secured by planning conditions or legal agreements. When harm cannot be avoided, screening should be implemented, although the design of this should be in keeping with the surroundings and avoid having a further negative impact on the area.

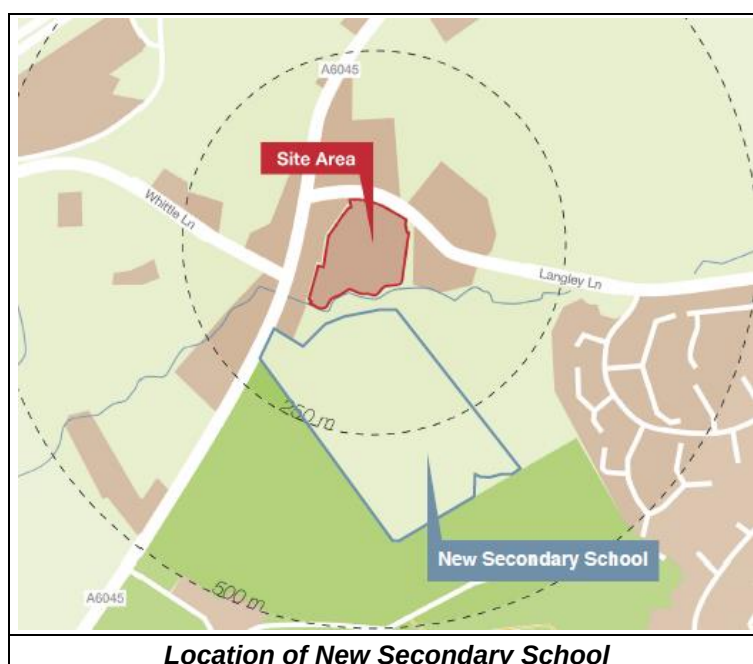
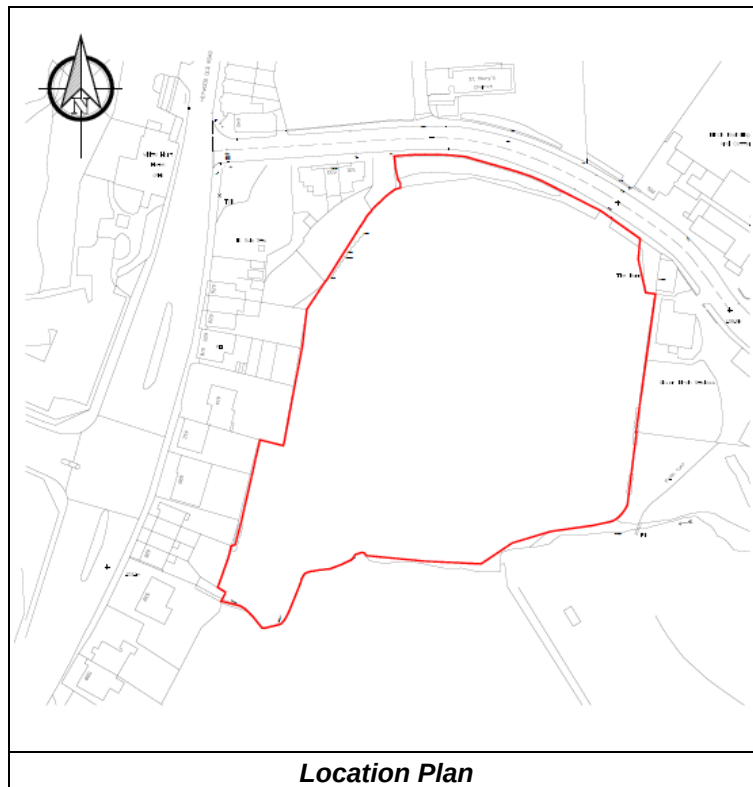
5: Making and documenting the decision and monitoring outcomes

The final phase of the process is to come to the final decision about the proposals. All of the information gathered from the previous steps must be considered. It must also be considered that all heritage assets are not of equal importance and the contribution made by their setting to their significance also varies. The capacity for a setting to accommodate change must also be considered and therefore decisions are therefore made on a case by case basis.

Section 3 Description of the Site

3.1 Location and Setting

Birch Village is a small village located 2 miles northwest of Middleton in Greater Manchester. The proposal site is a field situated on Langley Lane, to the east of the Birch Village Conservation Area. Langley Lane borders the site to the north, with existing houses to the west, and dwellings and curtilage bordering the east. The proposal site is bordered by Whittle Brook to the south, with the recently constructed Edgar Wood Academy School beyond.



3.2 The Site

The site is comprised of a field of undeveloped grassland, which has boundaries consisting of low level fencing, hedgerow and planting. The site slopes up towards the eastern side of the centre.

The boundary to the north of the field is formed by a tall hedgerow and trees; this extends to the line of the houses to the west. Small wooden fences border the site to the west and the site then backs onto the rear of the housing along Heywood Old Road. The southern boundary of the field is formed by small plants and shrubbery. The south and east of the field is also bordered by a wire fence, with a barn and other existing housing situated to the north of the east side of the site. Next to the barn there is a low level wooden fence.



Looking South from Langley Lane to the Entrance of the Proposal Site



Looking West Along North Boundary of Proposal Site



Looking Southwest Along West Boundary of Proposal Site



Looking South Along West Boundary of Proposal Site



Access Road



Looking Southwest Along West Boundary of Proposal Site



Looking Southeast Along the South Boundary of Proposal Site



Looking East Along the South Boundary of Proposal Site



Looking North Along East Boundary of Proposal Site



Looking North Across Proposal Site



Looking Northwest Across Proposal Site



Looking West Across Proposal Site



Looking Southwest Across Proposal Site



Looking South Across Proposal Site



Looking Southeast Across Proposal Site



Looking Northeast Across Proposal Site

Section 4 History of the Surrounding Area and the Proposal Site

4.1 History and Development of Birch Village

Birch Village was originally connected with the town of Hopwood, mentioned in 1292 as 'Hoppewode'. It lay in the southeast corner of this town.

The village itself primarily developed during the 19th century. The construction of Birch Mill led to the development of the village; most of the growth followed along Heywood Old Road, where the mill was constructed. By the 1820s Birch Village had its own parish church (St Mary's). Land for the church was donated by Colonel Robert Gregge-Hopwood in 1828. The church was completed in 1829, with an associated vicarage constructed on Langley Lane, just off Heywood Old Road to the west.

At the beginning of the 19th century The Grange and its associated farm were also constructed. There was also a spate of terraced housing being constructed by the mid-19th century. Birch Mill continued to develop and extend into the 20th century following a number of fires.

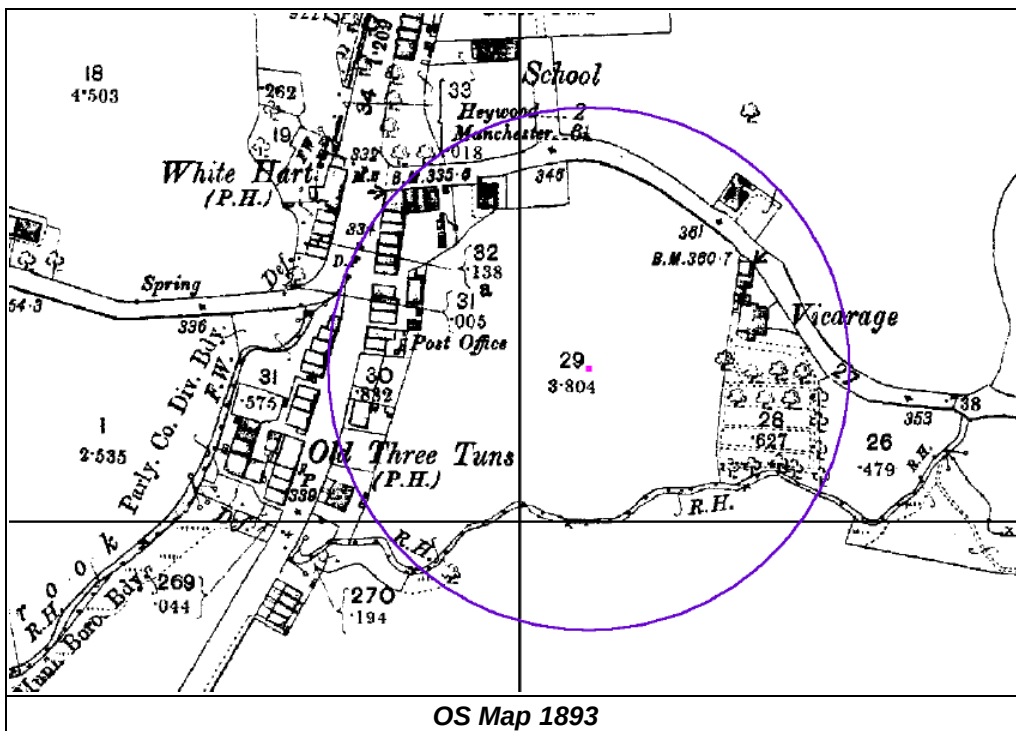
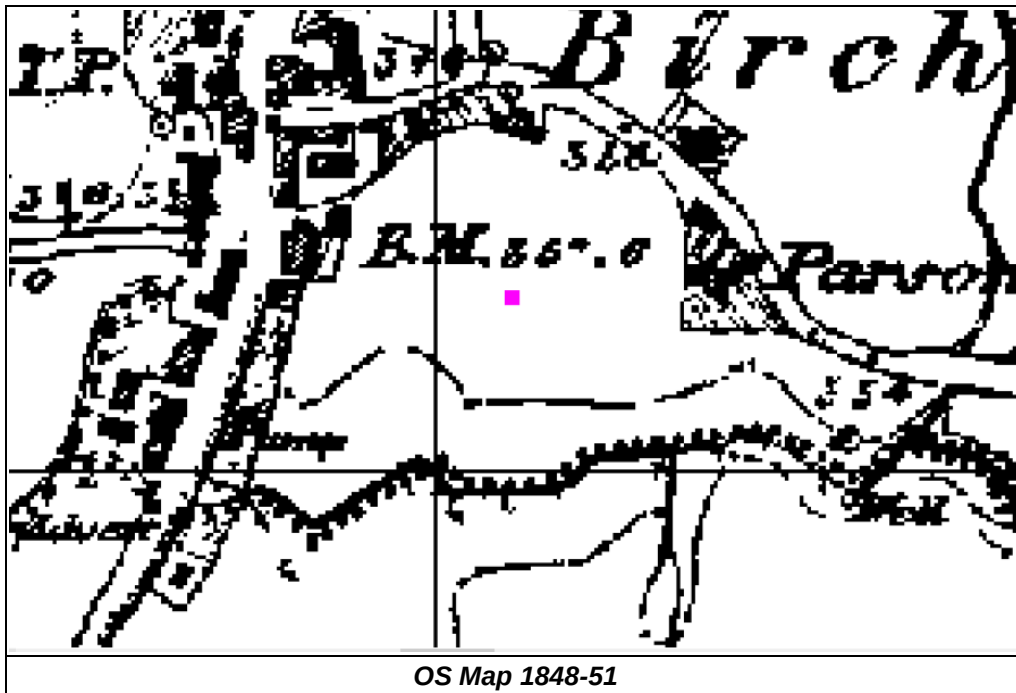
At the end of the 19th century the village became noticed due to the architectural work of Edgar Wood who was born in Middleton. He designed various buildings around the country, but focused on buildings around where he was born, including Birch village. Buildings in the area benefitted from the architectural legacy of Wood with many buildings being designed in the Arts and Crafts style of his buildings. A drinking fountain designed by Edgar Wood, built in 1888, still survives in Birch Village along Heywood Old Road.

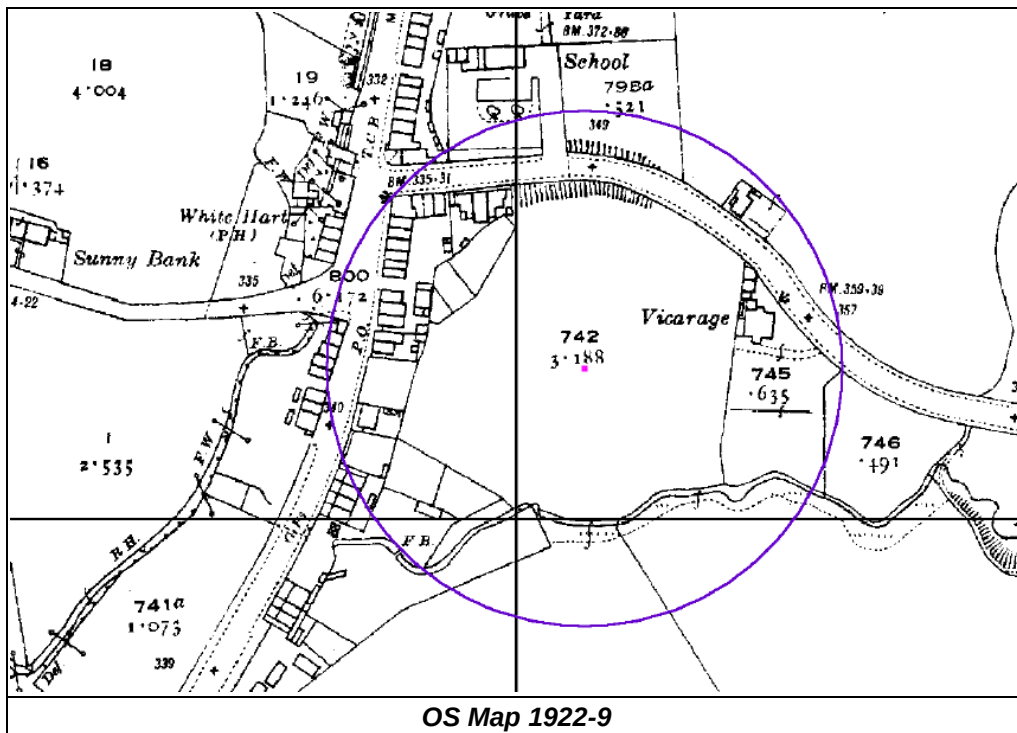
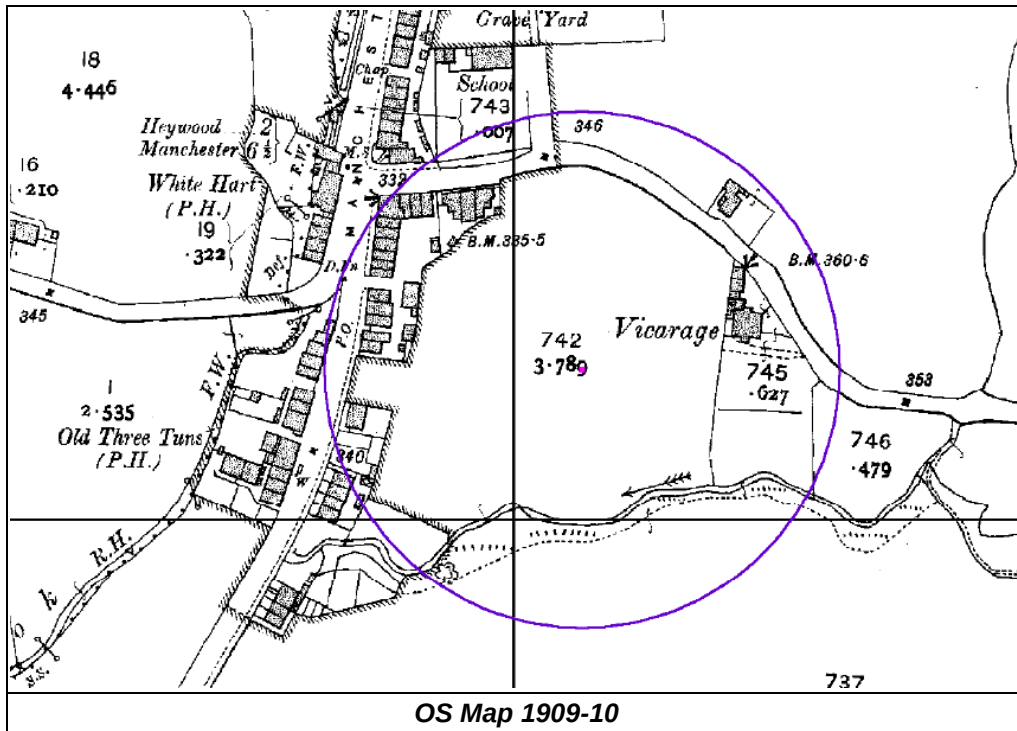
The decline of industry occurred through the 20th century, which then led to some disrepair in the area, especially to the mill.

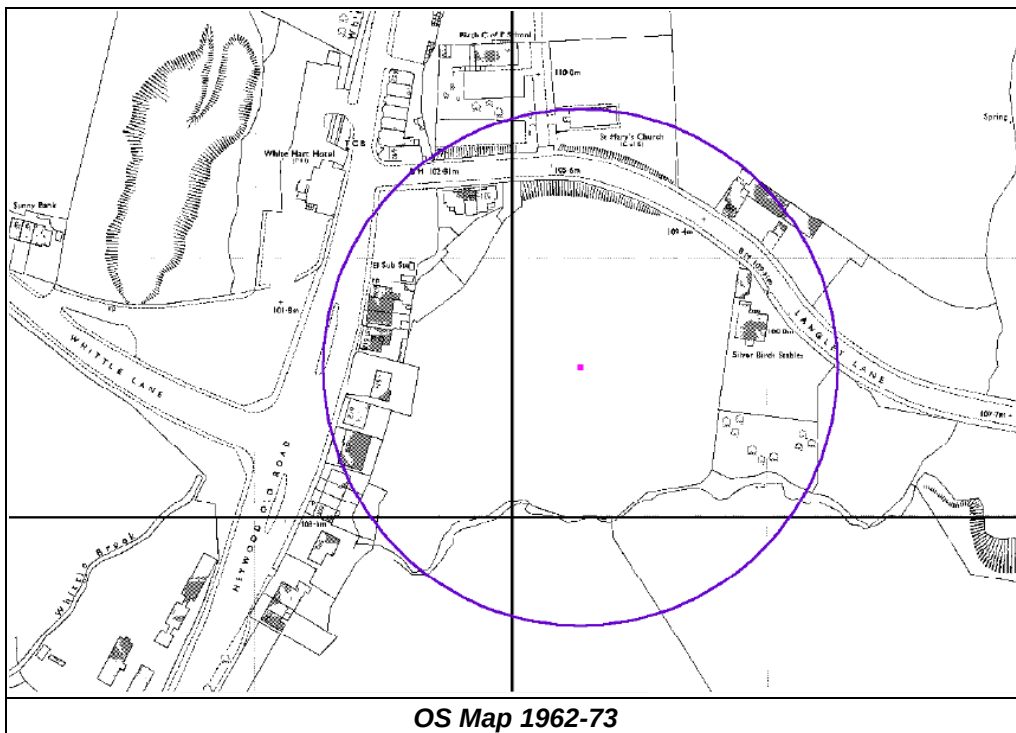
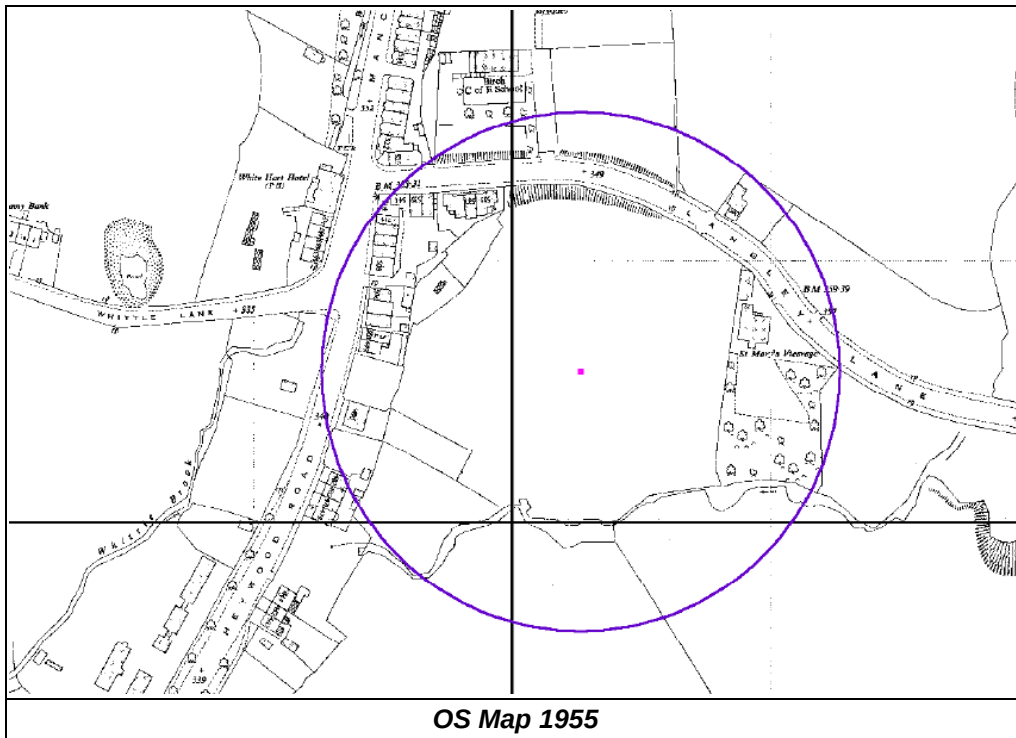
4.2 History of the Proposal Site

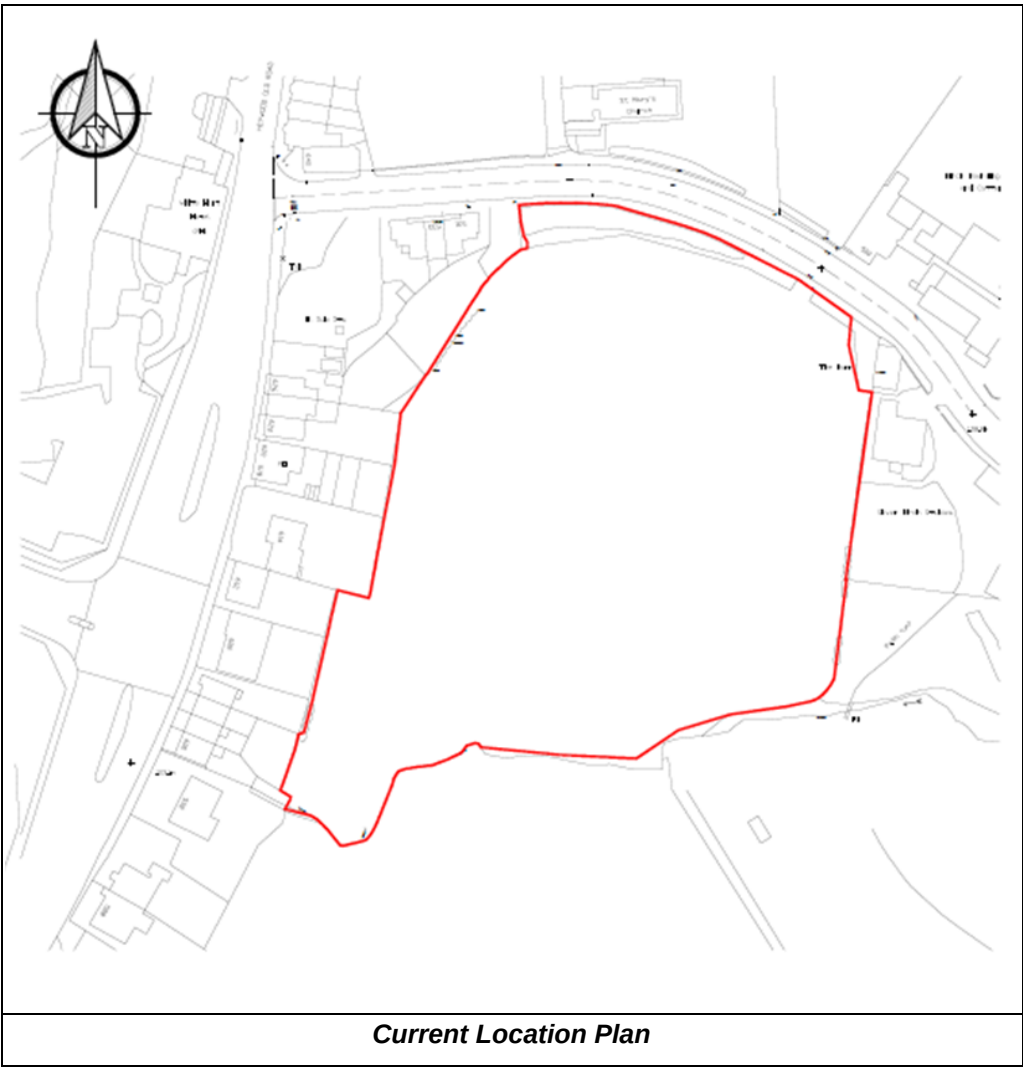
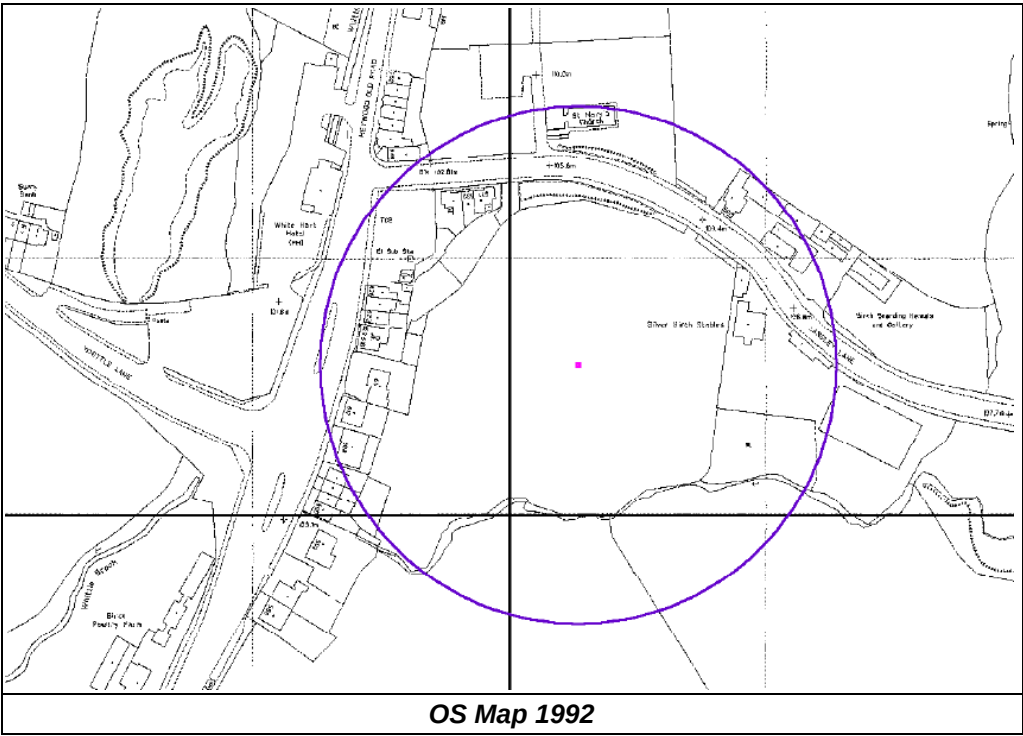
The field of the proposal site appears to have had minimal changes to its form according to the OS maps. The 1848 map shows that the borders of the field extend further out to the southeast. The northern and southern boundaries appear unchanged. To the northeast of the site the vicarage built for St Mary's is shown bordering the site. By 1893 the field appears to be in its current form. By 1922 there appears to be a small structure built to the southwest corner of the site, this was demolished by 1955 and there is no evidence of this structure remaining on the surface of the site.

4.3 Sequential Development of the Site









Section 5 Assessment of the Special Interest of the Conservation Area

5.1 The Birch Village Conservation Area

5.1.1 Key Elements That Define Special Interest

The Historic England document, *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*, outlines the key elements that define special interest (significance) within a Conservation Area. These are as follows:

- General Character, Location and Uses
- Historic Interest
- Architectural Interest and Built Form
- Positive Contributors (sometimes referred to as key buildings)
- Locally Important Buildings
- Spatial Analysis
- Streets and Open Space, Parks and Gardens and Trees
- Setting and Views

5.1.2 Summary of Special Interest of the Conservation Area

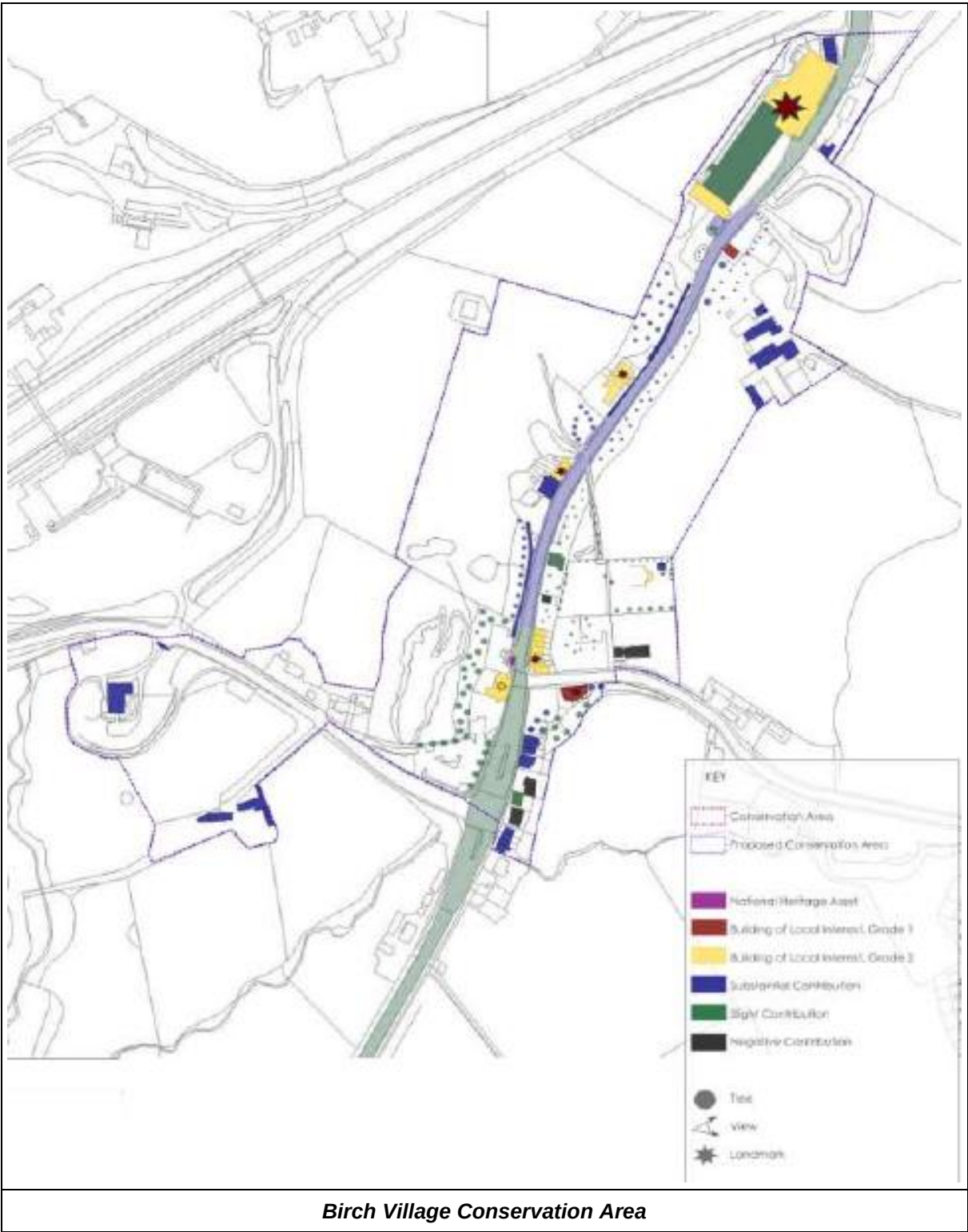
The Conservation Area Appraisal adopted as supplementary planning guidance in 2013 fully assesses the special interest of the Conservation Area using the above assessment criteria. The following excerpt from the Conservation Area Appraisal summarises the special interest and significance of the Birch Village Conservation Area.

The special architectural and historic interest of the Birch Conservation Area lies predominantly in its distinctive townscape (formed along the line of Heywood Old Road) as well as its association with notable architect, Edgar Wood.

The character of the Conservation Area therefore lies in the linear, road-orientated form of the townscape and the quality of the architecture along its length. This special interest can be summarised as follows;

- Strong association with influential architect, Edgar Wood (including the Grade II listed Birch Drinking Fountain)
- The close historic and spatial relationship between the architecture of the village and Heywood Old Road, creating a linear townscape
- The characteristic combination of early 19th century industrial architecture and late 19th century high quality Arts and Crafts style residences
- Distinctive local architectural detail - such as stylised gable ends, decorative roof ridges, flower-motif terracotta tilework and projecting bay windows.

Following the ICOMOS criteria (Appendix 1), the Conservation Area is assessed as having a medium level of significance, as it is a Conservation Area containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character.





View Along Langley Lane Towards the White Hart Public House



View Along Langley Lane out of the Conservation Area



View along Heywood Old Road Looking North



View along Heywood Old Road Looking South

5.1.3 Important Buildings and Positive Contributors

When assessing structures that make a positive contribution to the significance of a Conservation Area, Historic England guidance offers the following advice,

Most of the buildings in a conservation area will help to shape its character. The extent to which their contribution is considered as positive depends not just on their street elevations, but also on their integrity as historic structures and the impact they have in three dimensions, perhaps in an interesting roofscape, or skyline. Back elevations can be important, as can side views from alleys and yards. Whilst designated status (ie nationally listed) or previous identification as non-designated heritage assets (such as through local listing) will provide an indication of buildings that are recognised as contributing to the area's architectural and possibly historic interest, it will be important also to identify those unlisted buildings that make an important contribution to the character of the conservation area.¹

The Conservation Area Appraisal identifies important structures within the Conservation Area which are listed, as well as unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution to the character of the Conservation Area. The listed structure within the Conservation Area is identified as:

- Fountain Horse Trough (Grade II)



Fountain Horse Trough

The Conservation Area shows Buildings of Local Interest, Grade I and Grade II on the Conservation Area map, it also shows which buildings are viewed as landmark. The following buildings are landmark and locally listed structures:

- Birch Villas (Local Importance Grade I and Landmark)
- White Hart Public House (Local Importance Grade II and Landmark)
- 640-652 Heywood Old Road, Doris Terrace (Local Importance Grade II and Landmark)
- 743-747 Heywood Old Road, Drywood Cottages (Local Importance Grade II and Landmark)
- 757-763 Heywood Old Road (Local Importance Grade II and Landmark)
- Former Co-operative Shop (Local Importance Grade I)
- South Birch Mill (Local Importance Grade II)
- North Birch Mill (Local Importance Grade II and Landmark)

¹ Historic England. *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (London: Historic England, 2019) 20.



Birch Villas



White Hart Public House



640-652 Heywood Old Road



743-747 Heywood Old Road



757-763 Heywood Old Road



Former Co-operative Shop



Birch Mill (South and Centre)



Birch Mill (North)

5.2 Contribution of the Proposal Site to the Setting of the Conservation Area

5.2.1 Introduction

Due to proximity, the proposal site has the potential to affect the setting of the Birch Village Conservation Area.

5.2.2 The Physical Surroundings of the Conservation Area

The immediate setting of the Conservation Area is formed by rural land surrounding the edges of the Area. To the east along Langley Lane there is a large built up area, and the M62 runs to the west of the Conservation Area.

5.2.3 How the Conservation Area is Experienced

The way in which the setting of a heritage asset contributes to the experience of the heritage asset can help establish the contribution made by the setting. The historic development of Birch Village Conservation Area is reflected in its linear form and the surviving structures, primarily Birch Mill. The Conservation Area is most significantly experienced looking along Heywood Old Road, with the Mill and St Mary's being focal points at each end of the Conservation Area. The slope of the area towards the north and the winding nature of Heywood Old Road link the Conservation Area with its rural context. The previously discussed landmark buildings form part of the key views into the Conservation Area, and along Heywood Old Road.

Section 6 Proposed Works and the Impact on the Heritage Assets

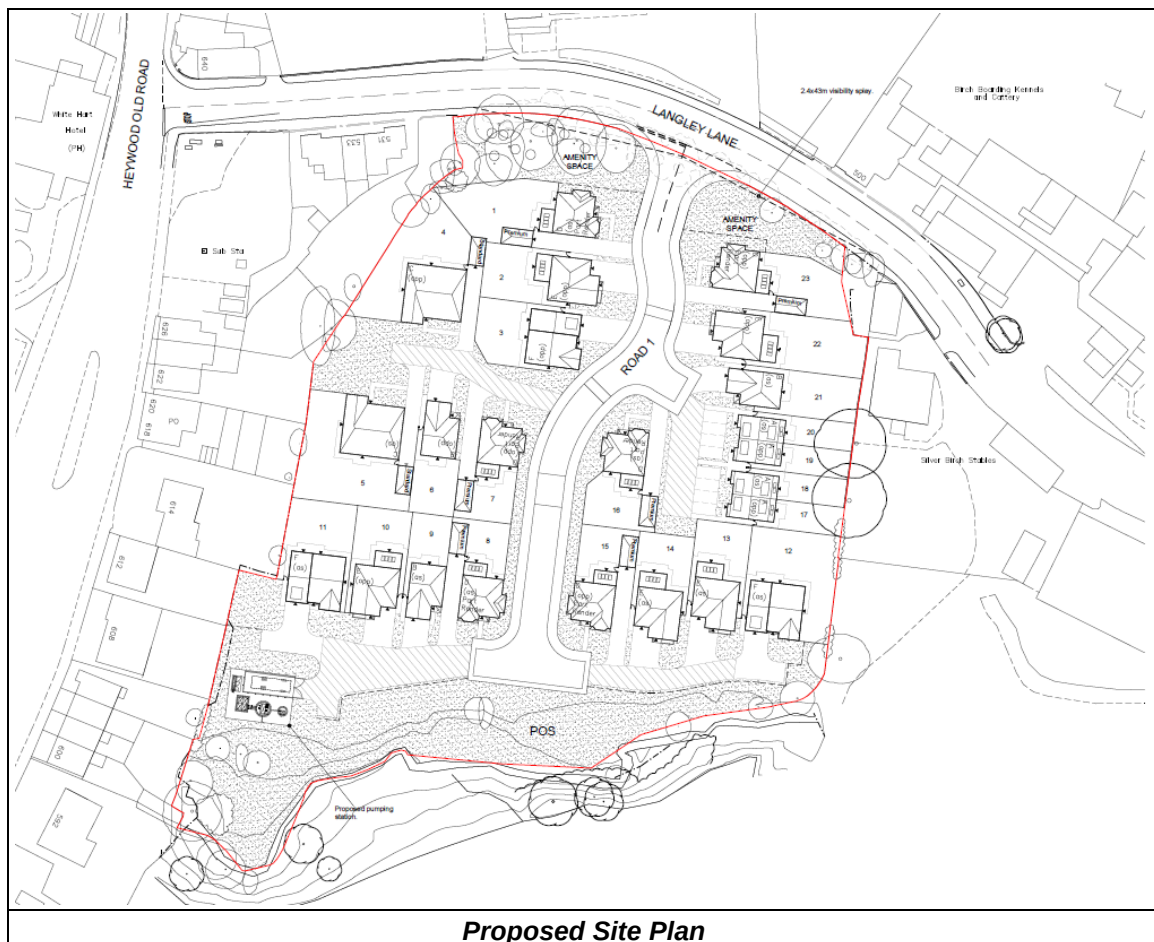
6.1 Description of the Proposed Works

6.1.1 Overview

Planning permission was previously granted for a development of 23 dwellings on the site. The current proposals are for a residential development of 23 dwellings, but with some alterations to the particular house designs and a slight alteration to the previously approved layout. There are to be 6 different housing styles of 1,2 and 2.5 storeys of which 2 types are 3 bed and 4 types are 4 bed properties. There are also to be 8 single garages built for some of the properties.

6.1.2 Access and Site Layout

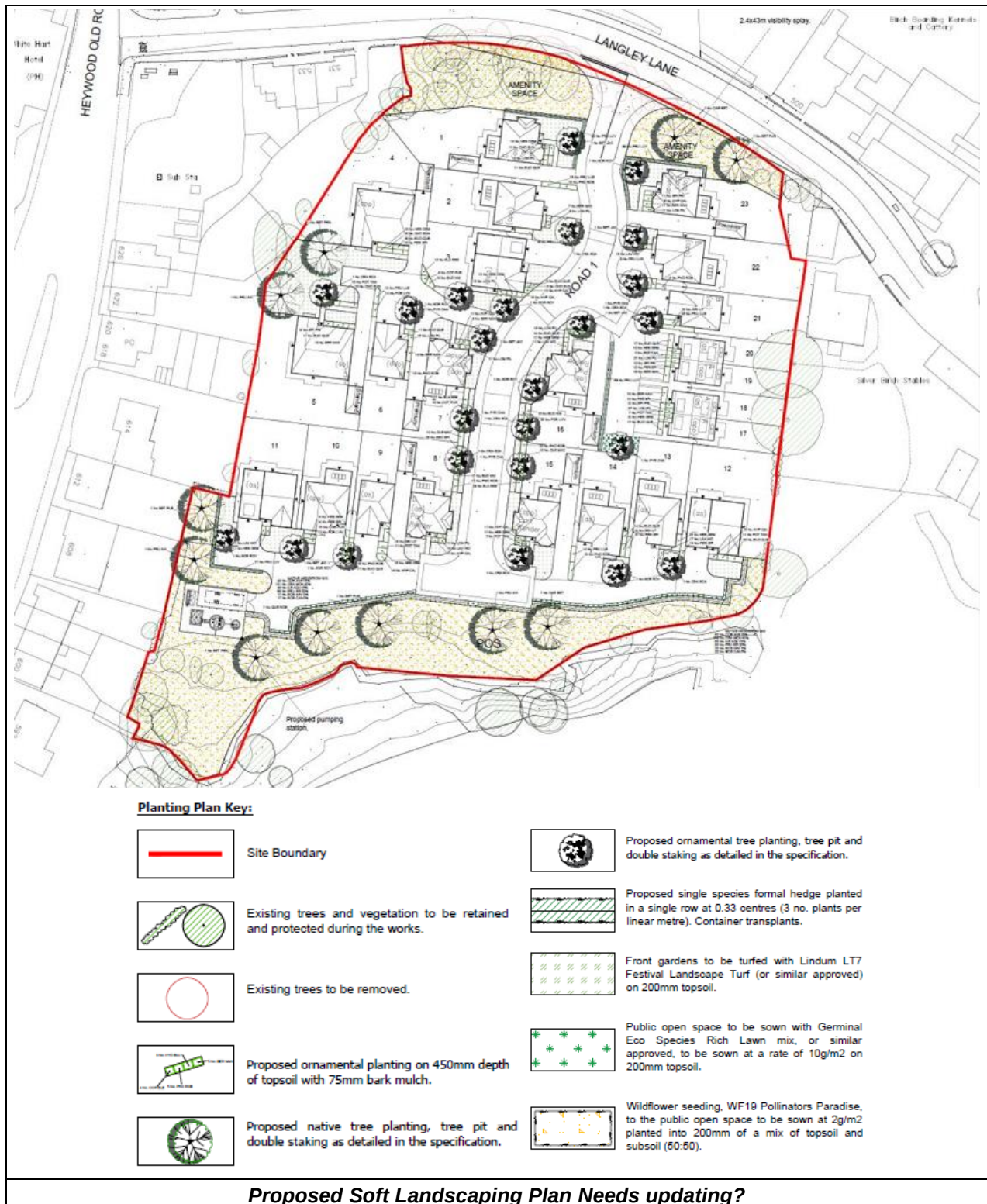
It is proposed that the entrance to the site will be at the northern border of the site; there will be a curved central road leading through to the south of the site. At the northwest end of the site, a small section of road will branch off to the west and the road will then branch off to the east and west at the south of the site. The road and drives will be constructed using black tarmacadam with concrete edgings. The paths and paved areas will be of 900x600mm grey concrete paving slabs.



6.1.3 Boundary and Landscaping

As previously approved, there will be minimal loss of hedgerows and trees in order to provide access to the site, the existing bank will be largely retained and replacement native tree and shrub planting will be carried out across the site. A vegetated screen will be created along Langley Lane. There is to be 1.8m feather edged screen fence boundary to the edge of the site and between the new

properties. To the west boundary and northeast boundary there is to be a section of acoustic fencing to ensure adequate amenity levels within the gardens of the new housing, it also forms a barrier between the new housing, and the existing housing. There will be 1.2m estate railings either side of the entrance at the north of the site and 450mm high knee rail fence to the south boundary. There are to be trees planted between the new site and houses along the west side of the site to protect the views and to the south of the site. There are also to be trees planted to the northeast of the site between the site and the barn. There are to be trees planted throughout the site, and each house is provided a garden and most with a tree, to keep the site as green as possible.



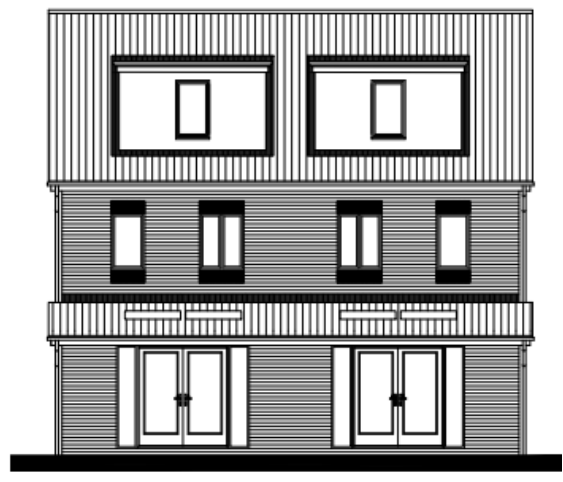
6.1.4 Proposed House Designs and Materials

The house types are designed to reflect the setting and character of the surrounding area and are in an Arts and Crafts style which replicates the external appearance of other historic properties in the Conservation Area. The Arts and Crafts design details include swept roofs, hung tiles to gables, half timbering, battered rendered bays, vertical boarded doors and casement windows. Proposed materials include red and brown brick, polar white render and slate grey roof tiles. Entrance doors and half-timbering to the houses will be either pale green, light or dark grey and windows will be white uPVC. Fascias, soffits and bargeboards will be white. House type D is designed to have a dual aspect and is used in areas of the highest visual impact such as at the entrance.





House Type A Front Elevation



House Type A Rear Elevation



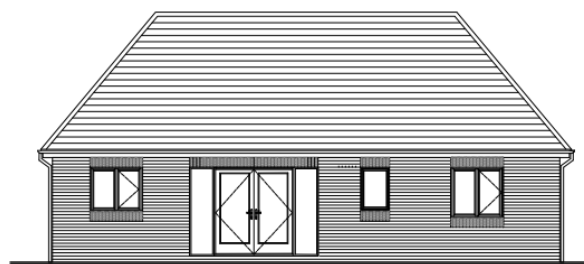
House Type B Front Elevation



House Type B Rear Elevation



House Type C Front Elevation



House Type C Rear Elevation



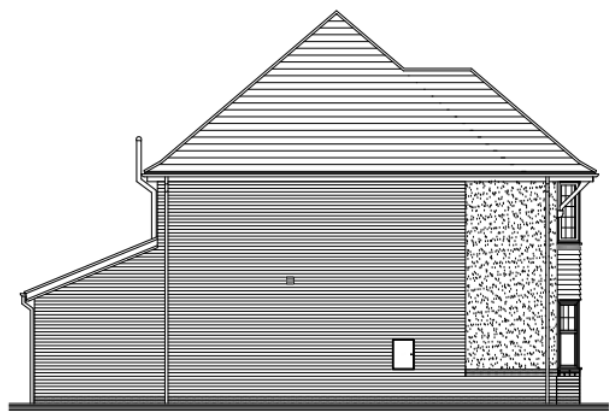
House Type D Front Elevation



House Type D Rear Elevation



House Type D Side Elevation



House Type D Side Elevation



House Type E Front Elevation



House Type E Rear Elevation



6.2 Impact of the Proposed Works on the Setting of the Heritage Assets

6.2.1 Method of Assessment

The proposal site is located to the southeast of the Birch Village Conservation Area. As the proposal site borders the Birch Village Conservation Area, it is the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area which is assessed, following Historic England Guidance.

The overall impact of the proposed works is then assessed using a cultural heritage impact assessment methodology based upon the International Council on Monuments and Site (ICOMOS) Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments, a methodology commonly used to assess heritage impact. The impact assessment also follows the ClfA/ IHBC/ IEMA guidance, *Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK* of July 2021. In the heritage impact assessment methodology, the significance of the impact of the proposed works is based on the value or sensitivity of the heritage asset and on the magnitude of the impact on that heritage asset. The criteria used for assessing value, magnitude of impact and significance of impact are set out in three tables included in Appendix 1.

6.2.2 The Location and Siting of the Development

The proposed development is located south of Langley Lane, to the southeast of Birch Village Conservation Area. The site borders the Conservation Area to the west and a small section to the northwest, however the entrance to the site is not located within the Conservation Area. The site does not form part of the significant views into the Conservation Area; the view towards the landmark building White Hart Public House will not be impacted by the development. The view incorporates the tall hedgerow and trees which masks the proposal site from view.

The west boundary is located to the rear of dwellings in the Conservation Area, however the important views in the Conservation Area have been identified as being along the front of Heywood Old Road, and the proposal site does not affect this view. While the Conservation Area Appraisal notes the green area surrounding the Conservation Area as important, the retention of trees along Langley Lane, and the planting of trees along the west and east boundaries protect the Conservation Area from views into the development. The houses will also have trees planted around them as well as large garden spaces, keeping the site as green as possible and keeping the development in line with the surrounding area.

6.2.3 The Form and Appearance of the Development

The significant viewpoints into the Conservation Area will not be affected by the development as the housing along Heywood Old Road and the mature planting along the western boundary of the proposal site will protect the area from views towards the development site. The mature trees and landscaped northern boundary along Langley Lane will also minimise the visual impact of the new development from this perspective and mitigate the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.

Without resorting to pastiche, the materials and designs of the proposed houses reflect the significant Arts and Crafts style houses in the Conservation Area. The use and colour of materials such as white render, slate coloured roofs and brick walls, and the use of design details such as projecting gables, bay windows, porches, hipped roofs, bargeboards and vertically proportioned casement windows all reflect elements of the significant historic buildings in Birch Village.



Birch Villas



Proposed House Type F Design



640-652 Heywood Old Road



Proposed House Type D Design

	
757-763 Heywood Old Road	Proposed House Type D Design

6.2.4 Wider Effects of the Development

The proposed development will change the land use of the proposal site, from an open field site to a residential site. However, the Conservation Area will remain largely enclosed by fields, and open fields will remain to the east and southeast of the proposed development site with the new secondary school to the south of the proposal site.

6.2.5 The Permanence of the Development

The proposed development will become a permanent feature within Birch Village. The design of the new residential development and the landscaped boundaries will minimise the impact on the setting of the Conservation Area and the remaining swathes of agricultural land will maintain the historic relationship between the village and its historically agricultural setting.

6.3 Summary of Impact

The historic asset, Birch Village Conservation Area, is assessed as having a medium value, as it is a Conservation Area containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character. The minor changes proposed to the previously approved new development will not affect the elements of the Conservation Area that are identified as contributing to the significance of the area, and as such will constitute a slight change to the setting that hardly affects the Conservation Area. Therefore, the magnitude of impact of the proposed works on the Conservation Area is negligible.

Following the heritage assessment methodology, the significance of impact of a negligible magnitude of change to a heritage asset of medium value would constitute a slight/neutral impact. As the proposed works use appropriate and contextual materials and designs, this assessment finds that the works will have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

6.4 Heritage Impact Assessment Table

The following table sets out the proposed works, identifying the potential impact on the setting of the Conservation Area the magnitude of change and the proposed mitigation

PROPOSED WORK	CONTRIBUTION OF THE AFFECTED ELEMENT TO THE SPECIAL INTEREST OF THE CONSERVATION AREA	MAGNITUDE OF CHANGE	POTENTIAL IMPACT OF WORK & PROPOSED MITIGATION
Minor alterations to the layout and house designs to a previously approved development of 23 houses and associated access and landscaping.	Neutral: The historic agricultural uses of the site provide a low level of historic interest in relation to the evolution of the nearby Conservation Area, but do not contribute to the significant elements of the Conservation Area.	Negligible: The proposals constitute slight changes to the setting of the Conservation Area that hardly affects it.	Neutral: The proposed development will have minimal impact on the setting of the Conservation Area, the retention of as much of the northern boundary, and replanting along the boundary, will minimise the visual impact on the view into the Conservation Area from Langley Lane. The Arts and Crafts designs of the houses are contextual to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Section 7 Conclusions

7.1 History, Development and Usage

The development site has maintained its current boundaries since at least 1893. There appears to be a building built in the early 20th century at the southwest corner, but this has since been demolished. The area is currently an area of open grassland.

7.2 The Special Interest of the Conservation Area

The following excerpt from the Conservation Area Appraisal summarises the special interest and significance of the Birch Village Conservation Area.

The special architectural and historic interest of the Birch Conservation Area lies predominantly in its distinctive townscape (formed along the line of Heywood Old Road) as well as its association with notable architect, Edgar Wood.

The character of the Conservation Area therefore lies in the linear, road orientated form of the townscape and the quality of the architecture along its length. This special interest can be summarised as follows;

- Strong association with influential architect, Edgar Wood (including the Grade II listed Birch Drinking Fountain)
- The close historic and spatial relationship between the architecture of the village and Heywood Old Road, creating a linear townscape
- The characteristic combination of early 19th century industrial architecture and late 19th century high quality Arts and Crafts style residences
- Distinctive local architectural detail - such as stylised gable ends, decorative roof ridges, flower-motif terracotta tilework and projecting bay windows.

7.3 Contribution of the Proposal Site to the Setting and Special Interest of the Conservation Area

The proposal site lies to the southeast of the Birch Village Conservation Area. There is a landmark at the end of Langley Lane, the view towards the White Hart Public House. The proposal site runs along Langley Lane, with tall hedgerows and trees blocking the view into the site. The green spaces around the Conservation Area are noted as being important, however there are other residential areas along Langley Lane and the area is largely surrounded by open fields.

7.4 The Proposed Works

The current application proposed minor alterations to the layout and house designs to the previously approved proposals are for a residential development of 23 dwellings with a site entrance on Langley Lane. The trees and hedgerows surrounding the boundaries are to be retained as far as possible with fencing following around the edge of the proposal site. There is also to be fencing and trees placed along the west boundary, with increased trees planted to the northeast of the site as well.

7.5 Impact of the Proposed Works on the Setting and Special Interest of the Conservation Area

The designated historic asset, Birch Village Conservation Area, has a medium value. The proposed works constitute slight changes to the setting, with the view into the Conservation Area being slightly effected by the movement of the site entrance, however the tall trees and hedgerows along the north of the proposal site are to be retained as far as possible so will make very little change to the view into the Conservation Area. Views along Heywood Old Road will not be affected as current residential properties will shield the view from within the Conservation Area. Following the heritage assessment methodology, the significance of impact of a negligible magnitude of change to a heritage asset of medium value would constitute a slight/neutral impact. As the proposed works use appropriate and contextual materials and designs, this assessment finds that the works will have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Section 8 Sources

Published Works

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority. *Places for Everyone – Joint Development Plan, Publication Stage Plan*. August 2021.
- Historic England. *Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*. London: Historic England, 2019.
- Historic England. *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets*. London: Historic England, 2017.
- Historic England. *Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note: 2*. London: Historic England, 2015.
- Historic England. *Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets. Historic England Advice Note 12*. London: Historic England, 2019.
- IEMA, IHBC & ClfA. *Principles of Cultural Heritage Impact Assessment in the UK*. Lincoln: July 2021.
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. *National Planning Policy Framework*. London: Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Sept 2023.
- Rochdale Borough Council. *Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy*. Rochdale Borough Council: Oct. 2016.
- Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. *Birch Village Conservation Area Appraisal*. Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council: 2013.
- Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. *Rochdale Borough Unitary Development Plan*. Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council: June 2006.

Maps and Plans

- OS Map Scale 1:10,560 1848-51
- OS Map Scale 1:2,500 1893, 1909-10, 1922-9
- OS Map Scale 1:1,250 1955, 1962-73, 1992

Archives, Libraries and Databases Consulted

- Archaeology Data Service
- Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record

Appendix 1: Heritage Impact Assessment Methodology

The impact of the proposed development has been assessed using a cultural heritage impact assessment methodology based upon the International Council on Monuments and Site (ICOMOS) Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments, a methodology commonly used to assess heritage impact. The significance of the impact of the proposed development is based on the value or sensitivity of the heritage asset and on the magnitude of the impact on that heritage asset. The criteria used for assessing value, magnitude of impact and significance of impact are set out in three tables below. These impacts may be either adverse or beneficial. These tables consider differing types of heritage assets: archaeological attributes, built heritage or historic urban landscapes, historic landscapes and intangible cultural heritage or associations.

Assessing Value of Heritage Assets

The value (significance) or sensitivity of a heritage asset is assessed based on existing national and local statutory designations, guidance such as the Historic England Listing and Scheduling Selection Guides and professional judgement based on research and site surveys.

Table 1: Assessing Value of Heritage Assets

Asset Grading	Archaeological Attribute	Built Heritage or Historic Urban Landscape	Historic Landscape	Intangible Cultural Heritage or Associations
Very High	Sites of acknowledged international importance inscribed as WH property. Individual attributes that convey OUV of the WH property. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged international research objectives.	Sites or structures of acknowledged international importance inscribed as WH property. Individual attributes that convey OUV of the WH property. Other buildings or urban landscapes of recognised International importance.	Landscapes of acknowledged international importance inscribed as WH property. Individual attributes that convey OUV of the WH property. Historic landscapes of international value, whether designated or not. Extremely well preserved historic landscapes with exceptional coherence, time depth, or other critical factors.	Areas associated with Intangible Cultural heritage activities as evidenced by the national register. Associations with particular innovations, technical or scientific developments or movements of global significance. Associations with particular individuals of global importance.
High	Nationally-designated Archaeological Monuments protected by the State Party's laws. Undesignated sites of the quality and importance to be designated. Assets that can contribute significantly to acknowledged national research objectives.	Nationally-designated structures with standing remains. Other buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities in their fabric or historical associations not adequately reflected in the listing grade. Conservation Areas containing very Important buildings. Undesignated structures of clear national importance.	Nationally-designated historic landscape of outstanding interest. Undesignated landscapes of outstanding interest. Undesignated landscapes of high quality and importance, and of demonstrable national value. Well preserved historic landscapes, exhibiting considerable coherence, time-depth or other critical factors.	Nationally-designated areas or activities associated with globally-important Intangible Cultural Heritage activities. Associations with particular innovations, technical or scientific developments or movements of national significance. Associations with particular individuals of national importance.

Medium	Designated or undesignated assets that can contribute significantly to regional research objectives.	Designated buildings. Historic (unlisted) buildings that can be shown to have exceptional qualities or historical associations. Conservation Areas containing buildings that contribute significantly to its historic character. Historic townscapes or built-up areas with important historic integrity in their buildings, or built settings.	Designated special historic landscapes. Undesignated historic landscapes that would justify special historic landscape designation. Landscapes of regional value. Averagely well preserved historic landscapes with reasonable coherence, time-depth or other critical factors.	Areas associated with Intangible Cultural heritage activities as evidenced by local registers. Associations with particular innovations or developments of regional or local significance. Associations with particular individuals of regional importance.
Low	Designated or undesignated assets of local importance. Assets compromised by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations. Assets of limited value, but with potential to contribute to local research objectives.	"Locally Listed" buildings. Historic (unlisted) buildings of modest quality in their fabric or historical associations. Historic Townscape or built-up areas of limited historic integrity in their buildings, or built settings.	Robust undesignated historic landscapes. Historic landscapes with importance to local interest groups. Historic landscapes whose value is limited by poor preservation and/or poor survival of contextual associations.	Intangible Cultural heritage activities of local significance. Associations with particular individuals of local importance. Poor survival of physical areas in which activities occur or are associated.
Negligible	Assets with little or no surviving archaeological interest.	Buildings or urban landscapes of no architectural or historical merit; buildings of an intrusive character.	Landscapes little or no significant historical interest.	Few associations or ICH vestiges surviving.
Unknown potential	The importance of the asset has not been ascertained.	Buildings with some hidden (or inaccessible) potential for historic significance.	n/a	Little is known or recorded about ICH of the area.

Adapted from ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments (2011)

Assessing Magnitude of Change or Impact

The magnitude of change or impact is assessed based upon a detailed understanding of how and to what extent the proposed development might impact the specific type of heritage involved. It is necessary to have an understanding of the contribution of the setting to the value of the heritage asset as well as an understanding of the key elements or components which contribute to the value or significance of the asset to be able to determine the magnitude of impact.

Table 2: Assessing Magnitude of Change or Impact

Impact Grading	Archaeological Attributes	Built Heritage or Historic Urban Landscape Attributes	Historic Landscape Attributes	Intangible Cultural Heritage Attributes or Associations
Major	Changes to attributes that convey OUV of WH properties. Most or all key archaeological materials, including those that contribute to OUV such that the resource is totally altered. Comprehensive changes to setting.	Change to key historic building elements that contribute to OUV, such that the resource is totally altered. Comprehensive changes to the setting.	Change to most or all key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; extreme visual effects; gross change of noise or change to sound quality; fundamental changes to use or access; resulting in total change to historic landscape character unit and loss of OUV.	Major changes to area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
Moderate	Changes to many key archaeological materials, such that the resource is clearly modified. Considerable changes to setting that affect the character of the asset.	Changes to many key historic building elements, such that the resource is significantly modified. Changes to the setting of an historic building, such that it is significantly modified.	Change to many key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; visual change to many key aspects of the historic landscape; noticeable differences in noise or sound quality; considerable changes to use or access; resulting in moderate changes to historic landscape character.	Considerable changes to area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
Minor	Changes to key archaeological materials, such that the resource is slightly altered. Slight changes to setting.	Change to key historic building elements, such that the asset is slightly different. Change to setting of an historic building, such that it is noticeably changed.	Change to few key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; slight visual changes to few key aspects of historic landscape; limited changes to noise levels or sound quality; slight changes to use or access; resulting in limited change to historic landscape character.	Changes to area that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
Negligible	Very minor changes to key archaeological materials, or setting.	Slight changes to historic building elements or setting that hardly affect it.	Very minor changes to key historic landscape elements, parcels or components; virtually unchanged visual effects; very slight changes in noise levels or sound quality; very slight changes to use or access; resulting in a very small change to historic landscape character.	Very minor changes to areas that affect the ICH activities or associations or visual links and cultural appreciation.
No change	No change.	No change to fabric or setting.	No change to elements, parcels or components; no visual or audible changes; no changes in amenity or community factors.	No change.

Adapted from ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments (2011)

Assessing the Significance of Impact

The table below, Assessing the Significance of Impact, uses a matrix to combine the value of the heritage assets with the magnitude of impact. This significance of impact can be either adverse or beneficial. An impact of major adverse would equate to an assessment of substantial harm, as defined in the NPPF paragraphs 200-201. Other assessments of adverse impact would equate to less than substantial harm as defined in the NPPF paragraph 202.

Table 3: Assessing the Significance of Impact

Value of Heritage Asset	Scale & Severity of Change/Impact				
	No Change	Negligible change	Minor change	Moderate change	Major change
For WH Properties Very High – Attributes which Convey OUV	Significance of Effect or Overall Impact (Either Adverse or Beneficial)				
	Neutral	Slight	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large	Very Large

For Other Heritage Assets or Attributes	Significance of Impact (Either Adverse or Beneficial)				
Very High	Neutral	Slight	Slight/ Moderate	Large/very Large	Very Large
High	Neutral	Slight	Slight/ Moderate	Moderate/ Large	Large/Very Large
Medium	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Moderate	Moderate/ Large
Low	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight	Slight/ Moderate
Negligible	Neutral	Neutral	Neutral/Slight	Neutral/Slight	Slight

Adapted from ICOMOS Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessments (2011)

Appendix 2: Historic Mapping

